

REMARKS

Claims 18-36 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, claims 18-25, 28-34, and 36 are cancelled. Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance in view of the following remarks.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 35 is again rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, under the same rationale as set forth before. Applicants again traverse the rejection and request that it be withdrawn.

Responding to Applicants' previous explanation of the claim and the support for it in the specification, the Examiner asserts that "the term 'cavity' is not defined in the specification, and as clearly shown in Figure 2 of the drawings, the blank 14 is not depicted as being substantially flat since it is clearly apparent from Figure 2 there are a number of depressions/recesses in the blank (14) and the depth of the depressions/recesses visually indicates that blank (14) is not substantially flat." Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has misunderstood either the claim and/or Applicants' prior explanation of how it is supported by the specification.

Application Figure 2 is reproduced below, and application paragraph [0035] specifically refers to the "cavities" 30, 31, and 32.

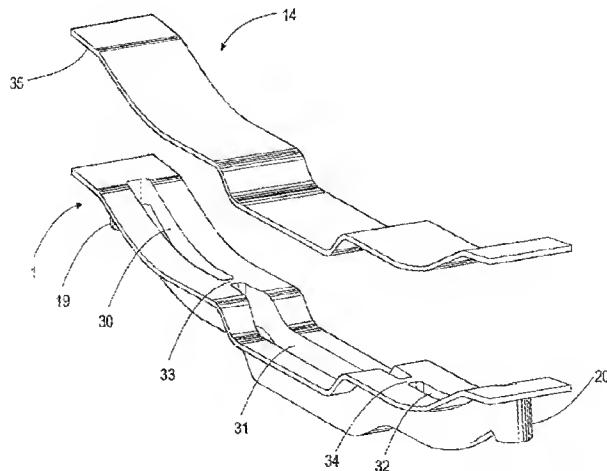


FIG.2

As for the Examiner's observation that the term "cavity" is not defined in the specification, it is not being used in any manner that is unusual or different from what one of skill in the art would have understood to be meant or encompassed by that term in view of Figure 2 and the accompanying reference to the cavities 30, 31, and 32. Therefore, no special definition is needed.

As for the second, upper blank 14 shown in Figure 2 on the other hand, the Examiner has not considered the claim language fully. The claim does not recite that the second blank is perfectly flat, period. To the contrary, it recites that the second blank is substantially flat in that it lacks a cavity but that otherwise matches the contours of an upper, joining surface of the first blank, and that is exactly what is shown in Figure 2. In other words, as one "moves" straight across the width of the blank from the front edge to the rear edge of it, one does not encounter any bounded holes or vacant regions of space like those regions 30, 31, and 32 which, consistent with common usage of the term, are identified as cavities. Similarly, as one "moves" from one longitudinal end of the second blank to the other, the topography may rise and fall to match the joining surface of the first blank as necessary, but it again does so without there being any cavities (i.e., bounded holes or vacant regions of space). Thus, Applicants again submit that the claim language is fully supported by the application as filed. Therefore, they traverse the rejection and request that it be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 18-25 and 28-34, and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Schneider et al., U.S. 2,674,783, in view of Lee et al., U.S. 5,934,544. Those claims are all cancelled. Accordingly, the rejection is moot and Applicants request that it be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 26 and 27 are allowed. In view of the foregoing, however, Applicants submit that claim 35 is also allowable, and timely Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

The undersigned representative requests any extension of time that may be deemed necessary to further the prosecution of this application.

The undersigned representative authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17 that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 14-1437, referencing Attorney Docket No.: 0173.038.PCUS01.

In order to facilitate the resolution of any issues or questions presented by this paper, the Examiner may directly contact the undersigned by phone to further the discussion.

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Respectfully submitted,

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